

GOOD TASTE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE THUNDER BAY ATARI ST ENTHUSIASTS, Volume 3, Number 8, *October 1989*

SEPTEMBER'S MEETING

The first meeting after the summer recess was fairly well attended, and several interesting items were discussed. Roy Stokes spoke about the status of the ST in the UK. The ST is very popular over there; cities smaller than Thunder Bay have well stocked ST software outlets. Piracy is a problem, but the much larger user base lessens the impact of lost revenue. I visited an Atari outlet in Singapore, and was quite surprised to find that the software listed are copies, including photostat versions of the applicable manuals!! (The same was true of an IBM outlet that I visited). I came back empty handed, fearing the wrath of Canada Customs. I have heard that the same situation prevails in Italy where you have a choice of buying the original, or a copy at a reduced price.

Six Disks-of-the-Month were available; sales probably could have been better. I certainly will not make the same mistake again next year. Keep in mind that I make 10 copies of each DOM.

Neville

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 25th OCTOBER

CONFEDERATION COLLEGE HANGAR

BLOODWYCH(demo) Doug Orłowski

Virus-Infected disks..... Neville

New Hardware & Software review Neville

Mikadon outlet in TBay Mall ... Doug Orłowski/Neville

Club PD Catalog progressNeville

OPEN FORUM - ALL

NOTICE: Tom is quite busy this month moving into a beautiful home with one of the most panoramic settings that I have seen. Naturally, it is located in the Kakabeka Falls area!! His father was kind enough to take me on a tour of the premises and grounds. It's an ideal site for a summer barbeque... how does that sound to you Tom?

Blame me for the somewhat ordinary appearance that the newsletter assumes this month. Although Tom took the trouble of coming over to my place and explained his format to me, the mechanics of the setup has totally defeated me!! Neville

STE SPECIFICATIONS by Doug Orłowski

Non Standard 15 pin ports allowing usage of 2 joysticks per port (with adapters) or light pens, paddles, light guns or other analog devices

Plug In SIMM(Single In-line Memory Module) boards. One comes with the computer with 3 extra slots available. Each SIMM has one Meg of RAM.

Stereo Jacks

Blitter Chip

Horizontal and Vertical and eight pixel hardware scrolling. The screen can be subdivided into several independently scrolling regions.

Colour Palette is now 4096 colours though the resolution remains the same.

A stereo 8-bit DMA chip has been added which can be accessed at the same time as the standard sound chip.

Double sided internal disk drive

TOS 1.6 with routines for the new hardware as well as some fixes

SECOND CHANCE FOR MIKADON? by Doug Orłowski

It has been learned that MIKADON has a Canadian source for UK software. This new company(North American Software Distributors) carries an increasing supply of all the latest releases several of which were ordered while I was there recently(October 10th). Titles that got ordered included: XENON 2(the Bitmap Brothers latest shoot-em up),BLOODWYCH(if you liked Dungeon Master you'll like this game),BLOOD MONEY(another great shoot-em up). I put down several others for consideration when they are released. These include: EYE OF HORUS.GAMES: SUMMER EDITION,TEAM YANKEE(tank simulator),CONFLICT EUROPE,STRIDER(arcade conversion),BATMAN(from the movie),SHINOBI(arcade conversion),NEW ZEALAND STORY(arcade conversion). Some of these games are available as demos on the ST FORMAT magazine disks. I will show these if there is interest and time. The complete games are now available to us. Prices are quite reasonable within 5-10% of the original UK price. This price is quite a bit less than the US price for that marketplace. Case in point. I have seen both versions of POPULOUS. The UK one is \$10 less expensive than the US one. Magazines like ST FORMAT will also be made available at \$11 or so per issue. That's a bit higher than the approximately \$6 cover price but when airmail shipment is figured in it's quite reasonable. Other magazines may also be made available.

ICD Hard Disks Review

The Journey for the Ultimate Hard Disk... Ends

by Douglas D. Hodson MVACE Co-Founder

I have seen the light! I have no more hard disk horror stories! I have no more complaints (read on)? I now have, hooked to my ever so powerful 1040ST, the Ultimate Hard Disk! A hard disk I could only dream about a year ago is now sitting beside my computer. Oh, what a setup, a fast computer, a good C compiler, a clear monitor, and of course the Ultimate Hard Disk. Can he take it? Is his system too good? Has he reached the top? Is there any more?

As you can see I a little more than excited about my new hard disk. It's the new 5MST hard disk from ICD. You know them from the 8 bit world by their reputation for producing excellent products. They now have entered the ST world with a line of hard drives that have the potential to take over the market! These drives are not without their faults however, I have experienced several of them. But with a little patience the drives can be assembled into a very nice pieces of hardware. The drives are very well built and formatting software is second to none!

OK, now for some straight talk (do I sound like Tom Curtner?). My first encounter with a ST hard disk was about 2 years ago. I bought the Atari SH204 20 megabyte hard disk. It worked perfect for the first 18 months, then out of nowhere the hard disk crashed! My Tandon hard disk went bad. I wrote an article entitled "Hard Facts about Hard Disks" a couple of months ago for MVACE explaining all the details. (By the way I received much response from this article, thanks to all the people who tried to help, and I'm glad to see these articles actually being read.) After swapping drives, controllers, power supplies, cables, you name it and I swapped it, the problem was never isolated. I did in fact buy a new controller and hard disk to cure the problem. The Atari hard disk has now been sold. Why did you sell a working hard disk? Because the fan is simply too loud for my ears. I also wanted something that was more expandable and with a longer cable.

The solution (I thought) was the ICD FMST hard drive kit. This kit includes "everything" needed to completely assemble a working hard drive system, as long as you supply the hard disk. I thought this was a good solution because I already owned a 5 1/4" 40 megabyte hard drive. I bought the kit and spent 4 hours trying to assemble it.

Sorry ICD, but your kit does not assemble the way the instructions indicate. The only way I put this kit together way to turn the hard disk upside down with the hard disk controller mounted offset from what the instructions indicated. I thought this was odd so I called ICD

technical support for some answers. The answer I received "well of course the drive has to be mounted upside down and controller offset" as though I was the dumb one. Take a close look at how you treat customers ICD. After explaining to them that their box has design flaws, I found out there was another new box in the works. This new hard drive kit would be called the 5MST.

This new kit would fit not only 1 hard disk, but 2 hard disks, and it's priced the same as the FMST. So I exchanged mine for the new, and waited a couple of weeks for the new one to be shipped. I assumed that designed flaws would be corrected. After the drive arrived I spent only about 15 minutes before giving up on installation of the ICD ST host adapter card. The card simply doesn't fit! I also received the wrong screws and no washers for assembly! Again I had to call technical support. When I said "I did not receive the proper screws and washers" ICD replied "Go down to Radio Shack and buy them"! But I thought "this kit was complete?".

The next thing I said was "I can't fit the ST host adapter card into the box" ICD's reply was "You must use a hack saw and cut out a piece of the mounting stand"! All of their responses were in a tone of voice as though I didn't know what I was doing. Naturally I was not at all impressed with ICD's technical support. After some more complains they finally agreed to send me the screws and washers required. Shortly afterward I saw the same kit for sale and inquired to look at how it was designed. I found the kit to be modified from kit I had purchased and an exchange with ICD took place. So now I have a good kit, good screws and washers ready for assembly. This time the kit went together without a hitch and everything worked first time. The ICD formatting software works like a charm, and is the best formatting software I've seen for the ST. The cable is long, the drive is quiet and I can add a second drive if I decide. I now can recommend ICD's hard drive kits for the masses, but not ICD's technical support.

See ya later, Doug

OCTOBER MEETING
WEDNESDAY, THE 25TH
CONFEDERATION COLLEGE
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE HANGAR
THUNDER BAY AIRPORT
7.00 PM